

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:26
ANSWERED ON:19.11.2001
TECHNOLOGY FOR JHUM CULTIVATION
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Haflong Soil Conservation Division, Assam has developed a technology for arresting Jhum cultivation;
- (b) if so, the details of this technology indicating the precise benefits that are likely to be accrued thereby especially with regard to protection of forests and the soil; and
- (c) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken to further promote this technology?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a)&(b): Yes, a technology named 'MODIFIED SCIENTIFIC SHIFTING CULTIVATION TECHNOLOGY (MOSSCULT)' has been developed by Haflong Soil Conservation Division for arresting Jhum cultivation. It is equipped with the technology of replenishing the depleted soil of its nutrients. This is done firstly, by fixing the atmospheric nitrogen to the soil by help of the strip-planted leguminous plants, whose root systems nodules have nitrogen fixing bacteria. Secondly, the penned cattle's bio-manure is distributed into the fields by the orthodox bamboo conduits. This method conserves the soil and water and also keeps in tune with the age old rituals and customs, i.e. it allows Jhum-like-cultivation in a scientific way, by allowing to burn a patch of legumes strip in a controlled way.

The ridgeline of the watersheds are to be covered by natural forest with indigenous viable species, the next lower reaches is for penning of the stray cattle and lower reaches for growing paddy, cash crops, horticulture etc. In the lowermost reaches (valley bottom), ponds are dug for practice of fishery and duckery. Similar ponds and poly ponds are dug at feasible places in the upper reaches to facilitate life saving irrigation and drinking purpose.

The technology is expected to infuse the barren abundant jhum field with NPK and other essential nutrients to produce better yields on sustainable basis and enthuse in the Jhumias a sense of permanency in hill cultivation.

(c): International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) of N.C.Hills branch has proposed to take up this technology during the current financial year.